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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters

Economic empowerment of women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in response to the request of the Commission on the Status of Women, in its resolution 54/4 on women's economic empowerment, that the Secretary-General submit, to its fifty-sixth session, a report on the implementation of that resolution. The report examines the economic policy framework on the economic empowerment of women and makes recommendations for future action.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 54/4, the Commission on the Status of Women proposed some measures that Member States and other stakeholders could take to promote women's economic empowerment and requested that the Secretary-General report to the Commission at its fifty-sixth session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report incorporates contributions by Member States[1] and organizations of the United Nations system,[2] drawing on evidence found in the publications of United Nations entities and other sources, and concludes with recommendations for future action for the consideration of the Commission.

2. Women's economic empowerment, both as a process and as a functioning reality, enables women to enjoy economic rights and make decisions that impact their own lives and influence others. It opens up opportunities for women to achieve other dimensions of empowerment, including political and social empowerment. In addition to its intrinsic value, women's economic empowerment can contribute to the achievement of other key development goals.[3] Achieving women's economic empowerment requires a comprehensive and coherent approach that pulls together institutions, policy instruments and monitoring frameworks, including the influence and leadership of women and groups working for their rights. It entails valuing, measuring and respecting women's work.

3. The report also examines the macroeconomic policy environment and analyses the situation of women as workers, entrepreneurs and decision makers, including their contribution to the economy and human well-being. It makes the case that women's economic empowerment is essential if societies worldwide are to exit the current global economic downturn and deliver balanced and sustainable global growth, with equality, justice and dignity for women and men. It focuses on areas where further action is needed to accelerate women's economic empowerment, including macroeconomic policy, trade, work and employment, entrepreneurship and economic decision-making. While access to and control over assets underpins women's economic empowerment, these matters are not considered in the present report in order to avoid duplication with other reports on the priority theme.

4. The two reports of the Secretary-General for the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the priority theme (E/CN.6/2012/3 and E/CN.6/2012/4) focus on economic empowerment of rural women and advancing rural women's

[1] Contributions were received from the Governments of Austria, Colombia, Djibouti, Finland, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Poland, Senegal, South Africa, the Sudan, Sweden, Turkey, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

[2] Contributions were received from the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC-ILO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Department of Public Information and the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

[3] See World Bank, *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development* (Washington, D.C., 2011).

empowerment through gender-responsive institutions. The reports highlight areas where further efforts are needed to accelerate women's economic empowerment, such as productive resources, including land, property and finance, and markets, the agricultural sector, sustainable development, service delivery and rural institutions. Member States are encouraged to consider these reports together so as to obtain an overview of women's economic empowerment issues.

5. The Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women provide the policy, legal and institutional framework for advancing women's economic empowerment. The international community has also made strong and comprehensive commitments to women's economic empowerment at other intergovernmental processes, including the Millennium Summit (2000), the International Conference on Financing for Development (2002), the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development (2008) and the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (2010).

6. In 2010, at the eleventh session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, States committed themselves to implementing actions to attain greater economic autonomy and equality in the workplace. In the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2011, States promoted the empowerment of rural women as critical agents for enhancing agricultural and rural development and food and nutritional security and for ensuring their access to productive resources.[4] In addition, at the High-level Policy Dialogue on Women and the Economy held by the Asia-Pacific Economic Corporation (APEC) forum in 2011, member States agreed to take concrete actions to realize the full potential of women, integrate them more fully into APEC economies, harness their talents, remove barriers that restrict their full economic participation and maximize their contributions towards economic growth. Human rights treaties, bodies and mechanisms have also addressed the issue. In 2011, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the Domestic Workers Convention[5] and recommendation aimed at improving the working conditions of domestic workers worldwide.

II. The macro economy

7. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and IMF estimate global growth in 2010 at 4 to 5 per cent, but there is a consensus that global economic recovery from the financial and economic crisis is slowing down as a result of tensions and failures in financial markets, sovereign debt problems in Europe, commodity price fluctuations and continuing global trade imbalances. Global growth projections for 2011 and 2012 are being downgraded, and the world's richest economies are expected to grow at a rate of less than 2 per cent.[6] The financial and economic crisis, combined with volatile food and energy prices, have

[4] See A/CONF.219/3/Rev.1.

[5] See http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C189.

[6] See International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook: Slowing Growth, Rising Risks* (Washington, D.C., 2011).

contributed to fast growing inequalities, which pose a threat to economic development, political stability, peace and security around the world.

8. Continued global economic stagnation and low growth will impede women's economic empowerment and poverty reduction, although a global recovery alone cannot guarantee their improvement. Gross domestic product (GDP) measures aggregate consumption, investment, government expenditure and net trade, but the way these aggregates are measured does not take unremunerated inputs into account. Therefore, the unpaid work of women (and men) and the "free" environmental resources that are used to produce the goods and services that society depends on do not enter the calculations of GDP or its growth. In order to truly assess progress in human well-being, GDP growth should be examined in conjunction with indicators of well-being, such as malnutrition and human development, including indicators that incorporate unpaid as well as paid work.[7]

9. In order to reduce economic and social inequalities and promote environmental protection, economic growth must be inclusive. In the 1990s, with a sustained growth in national per capita income, marginalized populations often missed out on the opportunity to improve their situation (see A/66/126).

10. Addressing women's economic empowerment is fundamental if inclusive pro-poor growth is to be secured; in addition to being an issue of human rights, there is a strong economic case for promoting women's economic empowerment. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), for example, estimates that if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30 per cent, raising total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5 to 4 per cent, thereby contributing to both food security and economic growth.[8]

11. While significant progress has been made towards achieving some of the Millennium Development Goals, the financial and economic crisis has jeopardized progress in some developing countries. For example, a study of six Latin American countries estimated that the projected recession in 2009-2010 and a slow and gradual recovery towards pre-crisis growth levels by 2015 would leave some low-income countries further off track in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for primary school completion, child and maternal health and access to drinking water and sanitation.[9]

12. The slow economic recovery has not delivered jobs. ILO warns that the global economy is on the verge of a new and deeper jobs recession that will delay the global economic recovery and may ignite more social unrest in many countries. Jobless growth urgently needs to be addressed and employment must be created for women and men. Ensuring a minimum level of social protection for all is critical to building fairer, more inclusive societies, based on equality of women and men, as proposed by the Social Protection Floor Advisory Group.

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[7] Jain, D. and Elson, D. (eds), *Harvesting Feminist Knowledge for Public Policy, Rebuilding Progress* (New Delhi, 2011).

[8] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-2011: Women in Agriculture, Closing the Gender Gap for Development* (Rome, 2011).

[9] Sánchez, M. and Vos, R., "Impact of the global crisis on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Latin America. New York", Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Working Paper No. 74 (ST/ESA/2009/DWP/74).

13. The financial and economic crisis has already squeezed the policy and fiscal space available to Governments, notably in the developed countries, to implement counter-cyclical measures. As fiscal stimulus gives way to fiscal consolidation, economic activity is likely to slow down, compounding the impact of lower government spending. Previous long periods of low growth and slow development, for example "the lost decades" in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, had gender-differentiated consequences. Women usually compensate for cutbacks in public welfare expenditure and drops in household earnings by intensifying their unpaid and paid work, especially in the informal sector, where there is little or no protection of their rights.

14. Policy debates on the critical issues of how to regulate markets, generate inclusive growth, promote equitable trade, create jobs and invest in the provision of essential services are broad-based and wide-ranging, providing an opportunity for gender equality advocates to engage, to make the case for women's economic empowerment and to ensure that gender dimensions of policies and programmes are taken into account.

15. Gender analysis of fiscal policies is critical. Tax systems, for example, can create and perpetuate gender inequalities since they can influence how women and men allocate their time for formal, informal and unpaid work.[10] A recent examination of the gender dimensions of tax policies and reforms in Argentina, Ghana, India, Mexico, Morocco, South Africa, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland illustrated the distributional impacts of tax policies on women and men, the impact of tax policies and reforms on both paid and unpaid work, both among and within households, as well as the differential impact on people over their life cycle.[11] The majority of women in the developing countries fall outside the personal income tax net as they are situated in the informal economy or in formal sector occupations where earned incomes are often well below the income tax threshold. The use of tax allowances in such contexts would therefore reach only the small proportion of women that fall inside the tax net.

16. Gender-responsive budget initiatives have been instrumental in assessing the gender-sensitivity of public finance management. They have provided guidance and monitoring tools so that commitments to gender equality policies can be matched with resource allocations. Austria requires that gender budgeting be applied in all phases of federal budget management, including planning, drafting, implementation and verification. In Sweden all statistics in the budget bill are sex-disaggregated and there is a statistical annex on economic equality between women and men. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supports advocacy and capacity-building efforts in gender-responsive budgeting in some countries in Africa, including Gabon, Ghana and Nigeria.

17. The development of gender-responsive policies requires both an understanding of the distributional consequences of economic growth strategies and the monetary, fiscal, trade and investment policies that underpin them, as well as an understanding of the forces that constrain women's economic empowerment. The Gender and Economic Policy Management Initiative, a joint initiative of the United Nations

[10] Barnett, K. and Grown, C., *Gender Impacts of Government Revenue Collection. The Case of Taxation* (London, Commonwealth Secretariat, 2004).

[11] Grown, C. and Valodia, I. (eds), *Taxation and Gender Equity: A Comparative Analysis of Direct and Indirect Taxes in Developing and Developed Countries* (Routledge, New York, 2011).

Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) that is well-established in Africa and is currently being replicated in Central and Eastern Europe and Asia, focuses on building a critical mass of gender-aware economists to support the development, implementation and monitoring of gender-responsive macroeconomic policies and frameworks. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia has developed guidelines and tools for gender mainstreaming to assist ministries of labour and national machineries for gender equality. The Department of Public Information promotes the issue of women's economic empowerment in its outreach and advocacy work.

18. Many economic policies tend to overlook the gender distribution of paid and unpaid work. However, it is possible to take the gender distribution of paid and unpaid work into account in policy diagnostics and design. South Africa's child support grant, for example, helps alleviate constraints, including the need for child care, that reduce the participation of working-age women in the labour force.[12]

19. The decline in income levels associated with recessions can restrict opportunities for poor children, and thus exacerbate the intergenerational transmission of poverty.[13] Social protection programmes have helped women mitigate some of the gender-differentiated effects of the financial and economic crisis. For example, in 2009, Mexico increased the coverage and scale of the "Oportunidades" conditional cash transfer programme, to help the poor manage increasing food prices. South Africa rapidly increased the coverage of social transfers that target poor households and the Philippines responded to the crisis by scaling up a pilot programme for conditional cash transfers, reaching 6,000 households in 2008 and 1 million by the end of 2010. The Government plans to reach 4.2 to 4.3 million poor families by the end of 2012.[14]

III. Trade

20. Trade policies, through their impact on the economic and social roles that men and women play, are linked to women's economic empowerment. Transmission mechanisms include the impact of trade policy on prices, employment, wages and skills. The impact of trade policies on gender relations will vary within and between countries and between different social groups and over time.

21. Employment in the export sector provides an important source of waged employment for women in some countries and regions. ILO has estimated that women's employment accounts for 70 per cent of the 27 million jobs in export-processing zones. More recently, women's participation in trade in services has contributed not only to their own economic empowerment, but also to national competitiveness.[15] While these jobs have contributed to women's economic

[12] See Group of 20, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, International Labour Organization, Country Policy Briefs (2011), South Africa (www.oecd.org).

[13] Nora Lustig, "Protecting Latin America's Poor During Economic Crises", Inter-American Dialogue, Policy Brief No. 2 (February 2010).

[14] World Bank (August 2011), Social Safety Nets Respond to Crises (see http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS).

[15] Puri, L., "Trade in Services, Gender and Development: A Tale of Two Modes", in *Trade and Gender: Opportunities and Challenges for Developing Countries*, United Nations Sales

autonomy and status in the household, the conditions of work in these industries have often been poor, marked by persistent low wages, gender wage inequalities, extremely long hours and job instability.[16] Concerns have also been raised about the lack of occupational health and safety measures, threats to, or bans on, self-organization by workers and violence and sexual and gender-based violence and harassment.[17] Furthermore, not all work takes place in the factory or in formal employment settings since some export goods are manufactured using piece-rate work or work done in the home. In such situations wages are typically too low to enable women to move out of poverty, and there is no access to social protection.

22. The expansion of the information and communications technology (ICT) sector has increased employment opportunities for skilled women in several countries. Data-entry and data-processing work generated employment in countries, including Barbados, Jamaica and the Philippines, in past decades, and more recently software call centres and telecommunications-related work has generated employment in countries such as Malaysia and India.[3] Nevertheless, women remain heavily engaged in the manufacturing of ready-made garments: women make up more than 80 per cent of such workers in Bangladesh and more than 75 per cent in Kenya.

23. Evidence from the Middle East and North Africa region suggests that export-led industrialization and female employment are positively related. Data from ILO show that by the early 1990s, the female share of manufacturing workers was 43 per cent in Tunisia and 37 per cent in Morocco. Oil-centered industrialization, on the other hand, inhibits female employment. In Algeria, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia, countries that rely heavily on oil extraction and revenues, only a small portion of the female economically active population is gainfully employed.[18]

24. Trade liberalization processes and structural adjustments may entail production and employment displacement effects.[19] For example, lowering tariff barriers entails adjustment as local enterprises may no longer be able to compete with imports. Finding new sources of work in areas that offer comparative advantage and developing export industries may take time, and the new jobs and opportunities created may be for entrepreneurs and workers with different skills than those employed in tariff-protected enterprises. Studies show that while, on balance, the gains from liberalized trade outweigh those costs, adjustment may not be gender neutral.[20]

25. Higher female employment in the export sector has been accompanied by wage gains in some cases. For example evidence from China shows that women workers receive higher wages in the new export-related industries than the older State industries, and in Bangladesh and Morocco wage discrimination against

Publication, E.04.11.D.29.

[16] Grimsrud Berik, "Gender Aspects of Trade", in *Trade and Employment from Myths to Facts* (ILO, 2011).

[17] International Labour Organization, *A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All* (Geneva, 2004).

[18] Moghadam, V. M., Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East (London, 2003).

[19] Pyatt, L., "The engendering of trade for development", in *Trade and Gender: Opportunities and Challenges for Developing Countries*, United Nations Sales Publication, E.04.11.D.28.

[20] See Winters, A., "Trade liberalization and economic performance: an overview", in *Economic Journal*, vol. 114.

women in the field of textile exports was lower than in other areas of manufacturing at the early stages of liberalization, and it declined even further over time.[3] This is not, however, always the case. In Latin America, for example, evidence suggests that trade liberalization has coincided with an increase in both income and wage inequality.[16]

26. In 2009, at the onset of the financial and economic crisis, world trade fell by 11 per cent. The fragility of the recovery in many countries and the weakening demand in advanced economies implies that employment in export industries that have previously been significant sources of employment for women in several countries is threatened. In Cambodia, for example, 18 per cent of the total garment workforce, mostly made up of women, was laid off from October 2008 to May 2009.[21]

27. Gender equality is slowly getting some attention in the international trade agenda. As reported by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), about 3 per cent of total "aid for trade" ($42 billion in 2008) included some gender dimensions.[22] Certain countries have made important progress in integrating gender equality into their trade initiatives: Uganda, in its national export strategy, identified constraints to women's participation in exports and incorporated measures to unlock the untapped potential of Ugandan women and increase their contribution to exports; Senegal reinforces the role of women in trade by providing support to women entrepreneurs under the Senegalese agency for export promotion; and gender is Sweden's overarching thematic priority in its aid for trade activities.

28. Nevertheless, the gender impact assessments of the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements are not fully used to influence trade negotiations. Women are often underrepresented in such negotiations, especially in the delegations of developing countries. In this regard, Pacific Island countries are currently carrying out a trade-related impact assessment on human rights and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has completed gender impact assessments of trade liberalization policies in Bhutan, Cape Verde and Lesotho.

29. Harnessing the full potential of trade for development requires addressing the gender-specific constraints in trade and increasing trading opportunities for women. Multilateral development assistance frameworks, including the Aid for Trade initiative, the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, provide entry points to integrate gender issues in international trade. Furthermore, women negotiators need to be actively involved when the Doha Round of trade negotiations resumes.

[21] International Labour Organization and the Asian Development Bank, *Women and labour markets in Asia: Rebalancing for gender equality* (Bangkok, 2011).

[22] "Aid for trade: A gender dimension", powerpoint presentation by E. Lammersen, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Gendernet, 8th meeting, June 2010 (http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/57/8/45523507.pdf).

IV. Work and employment

30. Women's participation in the labour market has increased: between 1980 and 2009, the global rate of female labour force participation rose from 50 per cent to 52 per cent, and the male rate fell from 82 per cent to 78 per cent. These changes reflect the trend among the young, both young women and young men, to study longer. As a result, rates of participation of men and women in the labour force have narrowed, worldwide, from 32 percentage points in 1980 to 26 percentage points in 2009.[3]

31. Gender differentials remain large in some regions and substantial barriers to the participation of women in the labour market still exist. The rate of women's participation in the labour force is lower, at 26 per cent, in the Middle East and North Africa region than in any other part of the world and the proportion of unemployed women remains higher than that of men.[23] In Latin America and the Caribbean female labour force participation has increased over recent decades,[24] but women's participation is still limited by discrimination, lack of public childcare services, and the burden of unpaid work.

32. There are significant and systemic differences between men and women's jobs. Only a small proportion of employed women work in industry worldwide (18 per cent compared to 26 per cent of all employed men). Women are more likely than men to work in the agriculture (37 per cent of all employed women compared to 33 per cent of all employed men) and in the service sector (46 per cent of all employed women compared with 41 per cent of men's employment).[25] Within sectors, firms and occupations, women and men are concentrated at different levels of the labour hierarchy. Women's advancement to more senior and managerial positions is hampered by power relations and institutional barriers, including norms and attitudes.[26] In the Middle East and North Africa region this is described as the "concrete ceiling" — women have to work twice as hard to prove that they are as flexible and as good at their jobs as their male colleagues.[27]

33. In the current global economic conditions finding employment is increasingly difficult in many countries. In 2010 the global unemployment rate stood at 6.2 per cent with the unemployment rate for men at 6 per cent and for women at 6.2 per cent.[25] Initially the male dominated sectors, finance, construction, transport and manufacturing, were most affected by the crisis. However, as the global downturn evolved, job losses affected both women and men equally.[28] Young women and men have been particularly affected by the crisis; in the 56 countries with available data,

[23] See United Nations Development Programme, *The Arab Human Development Report 2005: Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World* (New York, 2006).

[24] See GTZ, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, *Women's Economic Opportunities in the Formal Private Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Focus on Entrepreneurship* (Washington, D.C., 2010).

[25] See International Labour Organization, *Global employment trends for women* (Geneva, March 2009).

[26] See International Labour Organization, "Breaking Through the Glass Ceiling: Women in Management" (Geneva, 2004).

[27] www.executive-magazine.com, "Women in business — Breaking glass: Six Arab women executives on gender, careers and life", ISSN No. 96 (July 2007).

[28] International Labour Organization, "Global economic crisis, gender and work: key policy challenges and options", Global Jobs Pact, Policy Brief 15 (Geneva, 2010).

there are 1.7 million fewer youth in the labour market than expected, a fact that would indicate rising discouragement among youth. In the South-East Asia region young people are five times more likely to be unemployed than adults, and they are frequently underemployed.[29]

34. All over the world women are less likely to have access to decent work than men. Data show that women are disproportionately concentrated in "vulnerable"[29] forms of work; they are concentrated in low-productivity jobs; they earn less; and they do disproportionate amounts of unpaid domestic labour and family care work. Women are disproportionately represented in informal work.[30] In Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, women are employed in more insecure and informal occupations, such as part-time jobs, which are held by 28 per cent of employed women compared to 16 per cent of employed men. The majority of women are employed in low-productivity sectors, earning scant wages with less access to social protection.

35. Evidence from 83 countries shows that women earn between 10 and 30 per cent less than men.[31] In the United Kingdom, for example, the gender wage gap (median full-time hourly pay) stood at 10 per cent in 2010. Gender wage gaps reflect disadvantages in education; bargaining power and labour market mobility and flexibility; a high degree of involvement in part-time, temporary and low-income jobs; and direct discrimination. Worker qualifications and job characteristics do not completely explain gender wage gaps; studies of gender-wage differentials suggest that some of the difference between men and women's earnings is due to direct gender discrimination.[3]

36. Member States are increasingly focusing on measures to reduce the gender wage gap. The United Kingdom has eliminated pay secrecy clauses in employment contracts since October 2010. It has also asked organizations, particularly those with 150 or more employees, to report equality data about their workforce on a voluntary basis. In the Sudan, equal pay for work of equal value is the law. In Morocco, in 2005, the Ministry of Justice established a gender unit to reduce gender disparities in employment and to ensure equality of wages and access to resources.[32]

37. The increased participation of women in paid work has not, however, been accompanied by a reduction in their unpaid work. Cutbacks in expenditures on the provision of essential services and the introduction of user fees in sectors such as education, health, water and sanitation have pushed those who cannot afford to pay into a greater degree of dependency on the unpaid labour of women and girls. Evidence from Argentina, India, Nicaragua, the Republic of Korea, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania shows that women generally have longer working days, when both paid and unpaid work was counted, and that the amount of unpaid

[29] According to ILO, vulnerable employment is measured as the proportion of self-employed workers and contributing family members in total employment (see http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/indicators/methodology_sheets/econ_development/vulnerable_employment.pdf).

[30] See International Labour Organization, *Equality at Work: Tackling the Challenges*, report of the Director-General (Geneva, 2007).

[31] International Labour Organization, *Global Wage Report 2008/09: Minimum wages and collective bargaining. Towards policy coherence* (Geneva, 2008).

[32] Morocco, Ministry of Economy and Finance, *Gender Report* (Rabat, 2008) (see www.finances.gov.ma).

work performed increases when there was a young child in the house.[33] Similarly, time-use data from the Latin America region suggest that while the number of hours that women and men spend on unpaid domestic work and paid work can vary widely across countries, women's total work time is greater than that of men, and that women spend a larger share of their time on unpaid work than men in all cases. Evidence from high-income countries shows men spent a longer period of their working day in market-oriented work, while women spent more time than men cooking, cleaning and providing childcare.[34] In all of the countries covered, except the Nordic countries, combined market and non-market work resulted in longer working days for women.

38. Many countries have invested in public infrastructure, including water, transportation and energy, in order to reduce the burden of domestic work, including caregiving, within households. Running water and the use of electrical appliances can also reduce the amount of time and energy spent in these areas. UNDP has supported multifunctional platforms, consisting of a diesel engine and various associated tools such as grinding mills, huskers, alternators, battery chargers, pumps, welding stations and carpentry equipment, which have benefited approximately 2,000 villages in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. Their use has reduced the amount of time women spend on domestic work by two to four hours a day. IFAD has supported projects in Kenya and Mozambique, and Japan has supported a similar project in Senegal, to improve women's access to water and reduce their workload.

39. The reliable and affordable provision of care facilities and services for children, the sick and older persons, as well as access to affordable education, can facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life. Governments in many countries have encouraged the private sector and non-governmental organizations to become active providers, granting subsidies to care providers or income allowances to parents in order to make childcare services more affordable. The Governments of Argentina, Chile, the Republic of Korea and Uruguay have moved towards more comprehensive provisioning of care services, extending services and experimenting with financing and delivery mechanisms. In Spain, where compulsory education starts at age 6, early school education (3 to 5 years) is free and 95 per cent of children above the age of 3 attend school.[35] Poland's Act on "Care for children under three" forces companies to create crèches for employees. Italy makes care services a priority in its structural and rural development policies.

40. Initiatives also focus on increasing men's involvement and skills in caregiving. A well-documented programme involving young men has been developed by "Programa H" in Brazil and Mexico, using workshops, videos and manuals on

[33] Budlender, D., "The Statistical Evidence on Care and Non-Care Work across Six Countries", United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Gender and Development Programme Paper No. 4, December 2008.

[34] Razavi, S., and Staab, S., "The Social and Political Economy of Care: Contesting Gender and Class Inequalities", paper prepared for the Expert Group Meeting on "Equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS", organized by the former United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Geneva, October 2008.

[35] Beneria, L. and Martínez-Iglesias, M., "The New Gender Order and Reconciliation Policies: The Case of Spain", paper presented at the conference on the theme "Towards gender equality in the labour market: work-family life reconciliation policies", Istanbul Technical University, 27 May 2009, organized by Women for Women's Human Rights.

fatherhood, caregiving and HIV/AIDS to promote change in attitudes and behaviour.[36] The Sonke Gender Justice Network in South Africa uses innovative approaches to strengthen men's capacity and commitment to care for children, including orphans, affected by HIV/AIDS in rural areas.[37] An innovative project by Africare in Zimbabwe trained 120 men, aged between 20 and 65, as volunteer caregivers to increase men's participation in home-based care and HIV/AIDS education.

41. Securing more jobs, and decent jobs, adequate work conditions and sustainable livelihoods is particularly difficult for women in informal work.[38] Where employers draw on a labour force that has very few alternatives, they are able to pay exploitative wages, disregard employment laws and perpetrate violent acts on women, who usually cannot access complaint mechanisms or obtain legal aid to redress abuses.[39]

42. The lack of women's rights in the informal labour sector is reflected in how workers' rights are expressed and enforced by national and local law and practice, including whether enterprises are registered and whether they observe regulations governing business activities.[40] Labour inspection services in many developing and transition countries are not adequately staffed or trained, including in gender-sensitivity, nor are they equipped to effectively enforce standards, especially for micro and small enterprises and home-based and domestic workers.[40] Innovative schemes to evaluate workers' rights in the informal sector involve labour inspections, trade unions and workers themselves. In the State of Gujarat in India, for example, the Self-Employed Women's Association assists in monitoring the conditions of homeworkers and establishing minimum piece-rates consistent with the minimum wage.[40] In the Sudan, women working in the informal sector have formed associations to cover their health needs.

43. Implementing policies with no or little information on women working in the informal sector is difficult, especially since they are usually not enumerated in national employment or enterprise surveys. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Business Association for Home-based Workers (SABAH) initiative, in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, has mobilized 3,000 home-based workers to access decent work opportunities and markets for their products. The SABAH initiative has been instrumental in establishing fair wages for the piece-rate work of its home-based members, and they are represented on its board.

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[36] Barker, G., Engaging men and boys in caregiving: reflections from research, practice and policy advocacy in Latin America, prepared for the Expert Group meeting on "Equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS", organized by the former United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Geneva, October 2008.

[37] Esplen, E., *Gender and Care: Overview Report*, BRIDGE (London, 2009).

[38] Chant, S. and Pedwell, C., *Women, gender and the informal economy: An assessment of ILO research and suggested ways forward* (ILO, Geneva, 2008).

[39] United Nations, *2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women's Control over Economic Resources and Access to Financial Resources, including Microfinance* (New York, 2009).

[40] International Labour Organization, *Decent work and the informal economy*, Report VI, 90th Session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva, 2002).

44. Certain groups of women, including indigenous women, women with disabilities, women refugees, women in post-conflict settings and migrant women, face additional constraints in the labour market. Women represent half of the world's 215 million international migrants,[41] as well as a growing percentage of internal migrants who move from rural to urban areas — in China alone there are 200 million rural to urban migrants,[42] and a significant number of these are young women concentrated in the manufacturing and service sectors.[30] Women and girls disproportionately face rights violations at every stage of the migration cycle, including sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination, migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons and exploitation by employment agencies and employers. They lack access to social protection, reliable information on safe and legal migration, social services, woman-friendly remittance transfer mechanisms and savings and investment schemes.

45. Hiring domestic workers is a growing trend in all parts of the world for families seeking to reconcile household responsibilities with the demands of employment. Many domestic workers do not have formal contracts and receive no social insurance.[14] The hidden nature of domestic work makes it more difficult to enforce legislation.[43] ILO estimates that the number of domestic workers worldwide could be as high as 100 million, and data from 18 developing countries reveal that domestic work is 4 to 12 per cent of wage employment.[44] Between 74 and 94 per cent of domestic workers are women.[45]

46. Argentina, Chile and South Africa have legislated to provide basic labour and social rights for domestic workers. Since 2002, domestic workers in South Africa, for example, have been guaranteed minimum wages that are periodically adjusted to match inflation rates, including paid leave, overtime payments and severance pay. Employers are required to register domestic workers with the national Unemployment Insurance Fund and pay contributions, making them eligible for unemployment and maternity benefits.[43] In Lebanon, a unified contract, developed by a Lebanese steering committee in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and ILO, is now in place to protect the human rights of women migrant domestic workers.[46]

47. The International Training Centre of ILO (ITC-ILO) offers capacity-building courses on maternity protection, women's entrepreneurship and gender mainstreaming and develops gender auditing tools targeting Governments, workers' and employers' organizations and other development partners. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Antenna in Juba, South Sudan, initiated a project on creating opportunities for youth employment, focusing on training activities for young girls in reading, writing, food processing, crafts, tailoring, needlework and sewing.

[41] International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2010 — The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change* (Geneva, 2010).

[42] Chinese Floating Population Development Report 2010 (see http://www.gov.cn/jrzg/2010-06/26/content_1638133.htm).

[43] International Labour Organization, "Work and family: The way to care is to share!", theme of the Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work Campaign, 2008-2009.

[44] ILO estimates the number of domestic workers in 117 countries at around 53 million, based on national surveys and/or censuses.

[45] UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women: 2011-2012. In Pursuit of Justice* (New York, 2011).

[46] http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NEWSEVENTS/Pages/UnifiedContractLebanon.aspx.

V. Women entrepreneurs

48. Setting up in business can enable women to gain economic independence, overcome poverty and increase their well-being. While women are found in a range of entrepreneurial activities, many are concentrated in micro-, small- and medium-sized businesses as a result of unpaid work burden, limits on mobility, lack of collateral and limited financial skills. Women often go into survivalist or needs-driven entrepreneurship, as opposed to more lucrative businesses because of a lack of options and insufficient well-paid wage employment.

49. A UNDP assessment in 34 African countries found that the persistent concerns of women entrepreneurs were: lack of access to finance and productive resources; lack of access to international trade; the high cost of doing business; the difficulty of organizing as entrepreneurs for advocacy with Governments and other organizations; and insufficient entrepreneurial skills.

50. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia region, where women are still underrepresented among business owners and managers, 36 per cent of firms have female participation in ownership and 18.7 per cent have top female managers.[47] In Afghanistan, only 6 per cent of women ran businesses in 2004.[48]

51. Women's entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa region, where 20 per cent of firms have female participation in ownership,[49] remains low compared to other regions.[50] The share of female-owned firms varies from nearly 30 per cent in Lebanon, to 20 per cent in Egypt to just 10 per cent in Morocco. Yet female-owned firms are as well established, productive, technologically savvy and connected to global markets as male-owned firms, and more than 65 per cent of female-owned firms are managed by the owner. Despite this evidence, only 13 per cent of 4,832 firms surveyed in the eight countries of the region were owned by women.[51] While there are no significant differences in the types of firms owned by women and men, women face a more hostile business environment.

52. It is, however, possible for women to be successful entrepreneurs if enabling policies and institutions are in place. Enhancing the competitiveness of women's businesses can be critical to link women to global markets. For example, the programme organized by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (now UN-Women) for women producers in Burkina Faso resulted in increased production of shea butter that met world commercial quality standards, increased skills in sales, negotiation, marketing techniques, and the use of information and communications technology (ICT), and increased knowledge of and access to financial services.

53. The conference on "Women's economic empowerment", organized by the Canadian International Development Agency and UN-Women in Ottawa in October

[47] Contribution of the Economic Commission for Europe.

[48] Based on the contribution of the UN-Women Afghanistan country office.

[49] Compared to figures reported by the World Bank of 33 per cent in East Asia and the Pacific, 39 per cent in Latin America and Caribbean and 29 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa.

[50] No Arab State has a share higher than the world average of 29.2 per cent. The only Arab State with a share of full-time women workers higher than the world average of 27.4 per cent is Morocco, at 40 per cent. The regional average is 16.2 per cent.

[51] World Bank, "The Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa Region" (Washington, D.C., 2007).

2011, highlighted the need to support women entrepreneurs in addressing the challenges of globalization, competing in global markets and moving higher up the value chain. Networking among women entrepreneurs through personal contacts, trade shows and links between women's associations and enterprises in a value chain was considered critical for the development of women's entrepreneurship.

54. Responses highlighted initiatives that support women entrepreneurs, through training programmes, workshops, conferences and microcredit initiatives (for example, in Colombia, Djibouti, Latvia, South Africa and Turkey, and by UNDP, UNFPA, the Economic Commission for Europe, UNESCO, UNHCR and UN-Women). Initiatives in South Africa ranged from supporting women's entrepreneurship through various on-demand business development services and by providing easy and affordable access to finance and ICT solutions. The Social Fund for Development in Djibouti has provided microfinancing to women entrepreneurs.

55. The ILO Women's Entrepreneurship Development programme works with Governments, employers' organizations, trade unions and local community-based organizations to create an enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship development that generates quality jobs, builds institutional capacity in this area and develops tools and support services for women entrepreneurs.

56. The Economic Commission for Europe addressed the development of women's entrepreneurship by: improving awareness of the situation of women entrepreneurs through research, data collection and policy dialogue; building capacity for women's entrepreneurship development; and encouraging gender-sensitive economic policymaking.

57. While these initiatives contribute to the development of women's entrepreneurship, an integrated approach is needed to create an enabling environment for sustainable enterprise development, social dialogue and investments in basic education, health and physical infrastructure. Organizations, such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and Homenet, which help women entrepreneurs organize themselves into cooperatives and networks, should be supported.

VI. Economic decision-making

58. A major constraint on women's economic empowerment is their absence from the forums in which decisions are taken that impact, directly or indirectly, the distribution of economic and financial resources. Globally, the representation of women in national parliaments averages 19 per cent (17 per cent of ministers). The critical 30 per cent mark for women's representation at the national level has been reached or exceeded in 28 countries, 23 of which have used quotas to achieve that goal.[52] Women are similarly excluded at local levels of government in many countries. For example, in Melanesian countries, even though taxes paid by women vendors in local markets provide most of the finances for the local town councils,

[52] According to information from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm University, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2010).

women have no voice there, nor in decisions relating to management of markets, infrastructure and security services in the markets.[53]

59. Once in power women are not accorded equal access to all aspects of government. Ministers of the 27 States Members of the European Union, for example, were found to hold portfolios relating to socio-cultural functions (36.7 per cent), including social affairs, health, children, family, youth, older people, education, science, culture and sports, rather than portfolios relating to the economy (17.7 per cent), finance, trade, industry or agriculture.[54] In Indonesia, on the other hand, both the minister of trade and the minister of national development planning are women.

60. Women are also underrepresented in management positions in both public and private sectors around the world. Despite making up nearly half of the workforce and accounting for 60 per cent of new university graduates in the countries of the European Union, women make up less than a third of business leaders. The difference between the percentage of women business leaders and the share of women in the total workforce is greatest in Cyprus and Finland (both over 30 per cent) and lowest in Greece, Spain and Italy (all below 10 per cent). The latest statistics show that a typical board of 10 has just one female member, and that in 97 per cent of cases the board is chaired by a man. In 2010, women accounted for just below 12 per cent of board members in the largest publicly listed companies in the European Union, and for just over 3 per cent of board chairs.

61. The private sector can play a critical role in promoting women's economic empowerment. Germany's 30 biggest publicly listed companies have announced targets for promoting women without the introduction of a mandatory quota. The quota introduced by Norway has increased the representation of women on the boards of large Norwegian companies from 22 per cent in 2004 to 42 per cent in 2009. Sweden and Finland have introduced corporate codes that stress the importance of diversity and gender equality.[55] There is one woman member for every three men in Sweden and Finland, while figures for Latvia, Slovakia and Romania are only slightly lower. In Malta, Luxembourg, Cyprus and Italy, fewer than 2 per cent of board members are women. The situation is not very different in the United States of America, where women hold around 15 per cent of board seats in the Fortune 500 companies and chair 2 per cent of boards.

VII. Evidence and data

62. Better evidence is needed to design the policies that will increase women's economic empowerment and data are needed to analyse the gender-specific impacts of macroeconomic and trade policies. Another fundamental constraint is incomplete information about the value and extent of unpaid work that produces the goods and services families and communities rely on for their well-being and survival. Another is the unavailability of gender-disaggregated data, for example, on income and asset

[53] Based on contribution of the UN-Women Pacific subregional office.

[54] European Commission, *Women and men in decision-making 2007: analysis of the situation and trends*, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (Luxembourg, 2008).

[55] European Commission, *Report on Progress on Equality between Women and Men 2010: The gender balance in business leadership* (Luxembourg, 2011).

ownership, as well as on variables that indicate women's ability to participate in economic decision-making.

63. Since 1998, 18 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have produced time-use data with a gender perspective. A classification of time-use activities for Latin America and the Caribbean, currently in the final stages of review, was developed during the international expert group meeting on time-use surveys in 2009.[56] It was welcomed at the 2011 Statistical Conference of the Americas, where Member States were invited to make use of the proposed classification system and convey their comments, with a view to harmonizing time-use surveys in the region. Japan has been conducting time-use surveys every five years since 1976.

64. The Division for Gender Affairs of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean provides technical support to the production of statistical information with a gender focus. The increased demand for technical assistance demonstrates that Member States want to improve in the collection of gender statistics and to use the data gathered for policymaking. The user-producer strategy promoted by the Division for Gender Affairs has advanced the use of positive synergies between the national statistical bureaux and national mechanisms for gender equality. The Statistical Division of the Economic Commission for Europe provides capacity-building on gender statistics to national statistical offices in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The Commission also published a handbook on gender statistics in 2010, in both English and Russian, and training videos on 11 key topics in gender statistics have been developed in cooperation with the World Bank.

65. The United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA) of 1993 sets the standards for the measurement and classification of economic activities. It classifies most activities done by women (including cooking, cleaning and caring for children) as non-economic, thereby falling outside of the SNA boundaries, but it recommends that such activities be recorded in parallel — or satellite — accounts. The increased availability of time-use surveys has enabled the construction of additional satellite accounts, the one in Mexico being a recent example. Generally, however, data are still lacking and more work is needed on global standards and definitions. There is much to be done before the importance of measuring unpaid care work is acknowledged and fully integrated into national statistical systems.[57]

66. The Inter-agency Expert Group on Gender Statistics has developed a minimum set of gender indicators that will be presented to the United Nations Statistical Commission for endorsement by Member States at its forty-third session in February 2012. The Group proposes indicators in the following domains: economic structures and access to resources; education; health and related services; public life and decision-making; and human rights of women and girl children. The Expert Group recommends strengthening data collection instruments, especially household surveys, to fully reflect critical gender issues, and developing time-use surveys and data collection on violence against women and on entrepreneurship and women's economic empowerment. In response, UN-Women and the United Nations Statistics

[56] An annual meeting organized by the National Women's Institute and the National Institute on Statistics and Geography of Mexico, along with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and UNIFEM (now UN-Women).

[57] See International Labour Organization, *Global Employment Trends 2011: The challenge of a jobs recovery* (Geneva, 2011).

Division are currently working on a new initiative that seeks to harmonize existing gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data in employment, education and entrepreneurship and to coordinate and advance efforts to collect sex-disaggregated economic data, while ensuring country ownership.

VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

67. **Slow recovery from the financial and economic crisis, increased economic uncertainty, high unemployment and prolonged instability in the food and fuel markets permeate the global economy and affect all nations and people's well-being at different levels. Global policy responses need to recognize women's economic empowerment as an essential part of the solution to achieving balanced and sustainable global growth, with equality and justice and dignity for women and men.**

68. **Macroeconomic policies, if they are gender-responsive, can create the enabling environment for women's economic empowerment. Despite repeated initiatives to advance women's economic empowerment, there has been no coherent or systematic approach to address constraints to women's economic empowerment in macroeconomic policies and international trade policies.**

69. **While progress has been made in increasing women's access to employment, efforts are needed to strengthen institutions and equip them with the skills and resources to implement policies that accelerate women's economic empowerment and ensure workers enjoy the right to decent work. One critical area is the regulation of work and employment conditions of the most vulnerable workers, typically those employed in the informal sector, including home-based workers, domestic workers and migrant workers. Additional measures are also needed to enhance gender equality in the workplace.**

70. **Member States and other stakeholders are encouraged to consider the following policy measures and actions to advance women's economic empowerment:**

(a) **Evaluate the gender-impact of macroeconomic policies, in particular the policy responses adopted as a response to the financial and economic crisis;**

(b) **Develop and improve the use of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on women's economic empowerment; strengthen data collection instruments, especially household surveys, to fully reflect gender issues; develop time-use surveys and data collection on women's economic empowerment, including employment and work, and on entrepreneurship;**

(c) **Systematically monitor and evaluate programmes geared towards women's economic empowerment for results and impact on women's lives;**

(d) **Enhance women's agency in trade negotiations and ensure that trade agreements and trade liberalization processes are gender-responsive;**

(e) **Reduce the burden of unpaid work through investment in infrastructure and services;**

(f) **Create incentives for informal enterprises to formalize, including through simplified registration procedures and progressive registration fees and legal recognition of property rights;**

(g) **Remove the barriers to women's participation in the labour market, strengthen institutions and enact the reforms needed to secure decent working conditions.**